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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes reports of various Ohio committees and offices that have studied attendance and dropout problems and have developed strategies and recommendations for dealing with them. Those strategies and recommendations are provided along with the following: (1) a statement of the problem and its scope; (2) a list of roles and responsibilities for every level in the school system; and (3) findings of the Attendance Issues Study. Along with the report summaries, the following five recommendations are made for the Cleveland Public Schools: (1) a staff person should be designated to provide leadership and coordination to the District's dropout prevention efforts; (2) Project Perform, designed to create a school environment conducive to learning and teaching, should be expanded and made available to those schools whose faculties make the commitment to participate in the program; (3) viable attendance services to communicate with the families of truants should be restored in the District; (4) an alternative secondary school should be established for at risk students; and (5) the Transition Program, which eases students' transition to junior high school, should be restored. (PS)

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCERNS PERTAINING TO STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND REDUCING THE DROPOUT RATE

CLEVELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

August 1986

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCERNS PERTAINING TO STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND REDUCING THE DROPOUT RATE

COORDINATED BY

James M. Coleman, Special Assistant to the Superintendent

June 15, 1986

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Recommendations and Concerns Pertaining to Strategies for Improving Student Attendance and Reducing the Dropout Rate

Herewith are strategies and recommendations for improving attendance and reducing the dropout rate with the understanding that academic and social problems begin to take shape in the elementary schools.

We should also keep in mind that the middle school organizational change should address more attention to senior high schools in that our greatest attendance problems are reflected in the 10th, 9th, 11th, 8th, 7th and 12th graders in the order named.

We recommend that department heads and area superintendents address all the materials enclosed in order to have information that should address an intelligent attack on student absenteeism problems and dropout prevention concerns.

Attached also are materials that address concerns of the:

a. Office of School Monitoring and Community Relations

b. Juvenile Court

c. Citizens' Council for Ohio Schools

*d. Attendance/Dropout Prevention Committee

Finally:

a. A staff person should be designated to provide leadership and coordination to the District's dropout prevention efforts. Our existing programs are fragmented and require both enhancement and restructuring. The creation of a dropout prevention office would facilitate the implementation of programs and show a commitment in this area on the part of the District. New York City recently promoted a high school principal to the position of Superintendent of Dropout Prevention Programs (New York Times, March 5, 1985).

b. Project Perform should be expanded and made available to those schools whose faculties make the commitment to participate in the program. The committee* was very favorably impressed with presentations made by Project Perform principals at the elementary and junior high school level. Project Perform Schools have been successful in creating a positive school environment that is orderly and conducive to teaching and learning. Effective communication between the school and the home, frequent monitoring of the student's progress, emphasis on basic skills and high expectations for achievement have resulted in those schools already in the program.

c. Viable attendance services should be restored in the District. The linkage between irregular attendance, poor academic performance and dropping out of school is very evident. In addition to enhancing communication between the home and the school, attendance workers should have the skills necessary to

provide services to children and their families which result in improved attendance. There is ample evidence to show that secondary students who are chronically absent began this pattern while in elementary school. Early interventior is necessary.

d. An alternative secondary school should be established for "at-risk" students. The curriculum and the operation of this school should be designed by persons having expertise in the required areas. Attached to this report are summaries of successful alternative schools currently operating New York City, Newark, and Atlanta, Georgia. The elements of those schools which are most applicable to Cleveland should be incorporated in our facility.

e. The Transition Program which was pioneered at Addison Junior High School should be restored. Research data show that a student's record in the first year of junior high (middle school) is a very reliable predictor of success in secondary schools. The Student Assistance Program in Grand Rapids, Michigan has been designed to provide extra support to "at-risk" students in their own buildings. Although the Grand Rapids program does not focus on the seventh grade, the committee recommends that the initial target population consist of seventh grade students.

OFFICE OF SCHOOL MONITORING AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

OSMCR recommends that the District's attendance efforts strategically attack the attendance problem by:

a. Targeting those students and schools where the attendance problem is most severe;

b. Lodging responsibility for planning, implementation and research with appropriate administrative units;

c. Holding principals accountable for the implementation and design of programs and activities to improve attendance especially since attendance patterns appear to be related to characteristics of individual schools; and,

d. Assigning a more meaningful role to the Department of Research and Analysis in order that research efforts may address attendance patterns, trends, and problems.

JUVENILE COURT

Recommendations for Improving School/Juvenile Court Collaboration

In order to improve District/Juvenile Court Collaboration, it is recommended that:

*a. Consideration be given to a forum in which the superintendent and cabinet and the presiding judge of juvenile court again discuss services, objectives and programs in order to reduce truancy.

b. Participation in the above-mentioned should also accommodate principal, guidance counselor and attendance department representation.

*This task has been accomplished.

CITIZENS' COUNCIL FOR OHIO SCHOOLS

The Citizens' Council for Ohio Schools recommends:

a. That the school district assess record-keeping strategies whereby data collection methods could provide more detailed information by reason, grade, race, and sex for dropouts;

b. That the district further its resources in identifying and supporting students in crisis; and,

c. That greate attention be given to students who experience repeated academic failure since they represent a group at risk who have a dire need to experience success.

d. That the district examine explusion for truancy practices since such a practice is counter productive because it excludes students from school as an attempt to teach them that attendance is important; and,

e. That schools resources must be expended to the at-risk student population.

THE ATTENDANCE/DROPOUT PREVENTION STEERING COMMITTEE

The Attendance/Dropout Prevention Steering Committee, consisting of more than 30 persons representing significant staff and community publics, reflect their recommendations (attached) to conform with the organizational structure of same, i.e., the Attendance/Dropout Prevention Steering Committee accommodates the following structures.

a. School-Based Planning
b. Policy and Regulations
c. Special Populations
d. Staff and Parent Training
e. Youth Services Organizations
f. Departmental Strategies
g. Management Oriented Research

Each of the aforementioned subcommittees, therefore, have recommended certain strategies and ideas for improving pupil attendance.

These recommendations are submitted with points of view of students, principals, teachers, central office administrators, cluster directors, parents and community representatives.

The enthusiasm displayed by community representatives is quite evident by their attendance at monthly meetings, sincere input, and conceptual skills.

The Attendance/Dropout Prevention Steering Committee recognizes the District's role in providing a good school atmosphere, generating community confidence, involving parents, transporting pupils in an orderly fashion, and enforcing compulsory attendance laws.

The Attendance/Dropout Prevention Steering Committee likewise understands that the law places the primary responsibility for student attendance on the student and parent or legal guardian. Recommendations follow.

A meeting was held by members of the Attendance/Dropout Prevention Steering Committee with the Assistant Superintendent for Supportive Services and the Deputy Superintendent in June of 1984. A subsequent meeting was

held in October 1984 dealing with certain resources and support from all Departments of the District. It is, again, appropriate to meet with all Department Heads continuously.

Recommendations of the Attendance/Dropout Prevention Committee follow.

SCHOOL-BASED PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE

Rationale:

Regular school attendance is influenced by conditions present in the school house. Changes in these conditions which allow for greater student self-awareness and teacher self-esteem are essential for a reduction in truancy. Although change must occur it can only be accomplished with "rhyme and reason" following the guidelines of researched truths.

Recommendation:

1. A detailed study investigating the school attendance habits of Cleveland students should be developed and executed to identify all factors contributing to the truancy problem. The findings should serve as the basis for an attendance improvement program. (Student, building, and community characteristics should be explored).*
2. Teachers and administrators should feel secure in the knowledge that once assigned to a building they will be allowed to stay. This is an important factor in school stability. Stability allows students to succeed and success stimulates an eagerness to learn more. This does not preclude certain transfer of personnel commensurate with union agreements and federal court decree.
3. An in-house suspension room must be a well planned structure with adequate staffing and equipment if it is to succeed. Students being suspended must realize that the school considers their daily attendance important even though they have committed a suspendable offense.
4. The primary grades K-3 should be provided with expanded services and the necessary materials geared to the early educational success of the students. These items should include:
   (1) reduced class sizes, 15-20 per class, with the understanding that reductions in class size should dictate greater effec-

*Mission Accomplished

tiveness on the part of the classroom teacher as well as unique strategies in furthering the learning process

(2) adequate materials and current text books

(3) A guidance program to develop positive self concept and career skills

(4) a home-school liaison person

(5) supplementary personnnel to relieve the professional staff from non-teaching duties

(6) expanded homeroom activities

5. Remedial services for upper elementary and secondary students should include in-house tutorial personnel and a computer learning center, e.g., the Plato System (Control Data Corp.). Academic success is a key to diminishing inappropriate behavior.

6. An attendance aide assigned to each secondary Cleveland school and responsible for attendance records would be a necessary component in the campaign to reduce truancy. The aide would be responsible for contacting the parents of truant students and alerting the attendance centers about serious truancy.

POLICY AND REGULATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Rationale:

There is need to modify the definition of excused absences which appear in Administrative Regulation 5131.2 a.

Recommendation:

The following text should be substituted for the existing text of regulation 5131.2 a:

Regular Attendance

If any student has more than 7 unexcused absences in any subject in any marking period, he/she will be given a failing grade for that subject in that marking period.

Excused/Unexcused Absences - Unexcused absence is any absence not specifically listed below where the pupil willfully avoids attendance at school or in class:

1. illness;
2. religious holiday;
3. death in the immediate family; or,
4. unusual circumstances (as documented in writing for the principal).

It would be the right and responsibility of the pupil to make up school work missed as a result of excused absence.

Cases of chronic unexcused absence will re referred to the Office of Pupil Adjustment which will have sole authority to make attendance related filings in the Juvenile Court.

Rationale:

There is need for Board policy and regulations to recognize positive aspects of an attendance policy.

Recommendation:

Each school should be required to initiate activities which recognize pupils with exemplary attendance records.

Rationale:

The impact of Pentamation in the area of attendance cannot be accurately ascertained at this time.

Recommendation:

There should be new attendance policies, regulations and procedures. Modifications should be considered to accommodate the impact, if any, of Pentamation.

(See Material Attached)

Rationale:

Pupils and parents currently have no certain way of determining whether a failing grade is a result of the implementation of the attendance policy or because of unsatisfactory academic performance.

Recommendation:

Recport cards should be modified so that failing grades which are solely a result of the attendance policy can be ascertained.

Rationale:

It is unclear as to which personnel have specific responsibilities for carrying out the provision Notification of Parents and Attendance Office contained in Administrative Regulations 5131.2 a. Furthermore there is no mechanism for alerting parents as to what they may expect from the school in the way of notification.

Recommendation:

Each school should be required to develop an attendance plan which specifically assigns responsibilities mandated under the Notification of 5131.2 a (Administrative Regulations). Such a plan should be disseminated to all pupils and their parents.

Rationale:

The appropriateness of the "seven unexcused absences" rule should be studied.

Recommendation:

The Research and Analysis Department should be asked to conduct a study on the effect of the current "seven unexcused absences" regulation. An effort should be made to ascertain whether improved attendance this year was due, in part, to implementation of the regulation. A model should be developed to forecast probable effects of raising or lowering the "seven day" criteria.

There is need to modify the Student Assignment Policy to accommodate the needs of single parent families with child care problems. Children are not currently permitted to attend a school convenient to the child care facility where they are placed.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIES SUBCOMMITTEES

Rationale:

There is a need to explore student and faculty concerns which would have an impact on student attendance. We found that there are two main areas which required support. First, curricular and faculty needs, and secondly, special student support systems. These recommendations have been selected because they represent concomitants of a support system necessary to encourage school attendance.

Recommendation:

Suggestions to implement successful re-entry of special population students.

Need for additional or special student support systems.

1. All day clinical communication basic skills laboratory.
2. Behavior modification programs, e.g., Glasser interaction, green circle, etc. Teacher and staff sensitivity and effectiveness training programs.
3. Close liaison with community based agencies to assist through referral services with special problems, e.g., alcohol and drug addiction.
4. Provide transportation for special court adjudicated population groups for whom existing transportation is adequate.
5. Development of magnet/multi-lingual schools open to all interested students to develop bilingual-trilingual skills, which also attract many truants from native bilingual backgrounds as well as many monolingual students who have been successful in other academic skills.
6. Peer, student, and teacher support service, social conference, and immediate attention to students with identified problems.
7. In-school required attendance suspension programs as viable alternatives to out-of-school suspension.
8. Need for a supportive "Buddy System" for returning students.
9. Need for Upward Reach staff in junior highs as well as high schools. (Now focused in senior high only).

Curricular and faculty needs

1. Intensive inservice for school counselors and teachers of the hard to reach/teach students to identify and provide individualized and continuous progress in response to their intake evaluation.
2. Inform faculty, administration, and staff of programs available in each school for best possible placement of returning special students.
3. Schools with linguistic minority populations should offer multi-culture/history courses that will assist these students with self-identity problems.
4. Composition of faculty members and administrators should reflect the multi-ethnic composition of the student population (especially in schools with large number of linguistic minority students). Review the system's minority hiring practices and minority faculty assignments.
5. Review suspension policy. Review suspension data available to determine effectiveness of suspension practices.
6. Prior contact with alternative schools and institutions for appropriate information regarding referral processes that facilitate transfers.
7. Special teacher support system for personal and professional problems of staff to enable staff to cope with student problems as a result of resolving other personal or school intervening problems.
8. Teacher field placement with Cleveland Alternative Education Program of selected junior high and high school teachers who rotate yearly or semi-yearly.

STAFF AND PARENT TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE

Rationale:

Phyllis Eckhaus in Attending to Truants and Dropouts, states:

"It is our contention that school staff, like students and other human beings, function according to the system in which they find themselves; until teachers are empowered to resume the role of educator, young people will continue to perceive them as 'glorified babysitters' and will treat attendance in their classroom accordingly."

Recommendations:

1. The adoption of a system-wide home call and visitation program.
2. The support for teachers assuming more responsibility for areas over which they have control (i.e., homeroom and class attendance).
3. The continued personal and professional growth of staff.
4. The provision of teacher incentives such as building and system-wide awards and recognition.
5. The development in buildings of yearlong plans that reflect individualized needs as well as district-wide goals.
6. The development of system-wide early intervention programs.
7. The creation of skills development for volunteers who would relate to parents relative to attendance matters.

YOUTH SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Rationale:

There are numerous social service agencies which can assist students with attendance problems. A cooperative relationship should be developed between the Cleveland Public Schools and area service agencies in order to impact upon student non-attendance.

Recommendation:

Provide transportation of our children to a from school during times of crisis housing: American Red Cross, Safe Space, Salvation Army, West Side Catholic Center, Evangeline Home, Templum House, etc.

Develop a re-entry mechanism which will provide for the following needs:

a. make-up assignments
b. make-up tests
c. replacement of books
d. parent-teacher conference

Emergency shelters which house our students and their families should be placed on all district mailing lists.

Volunteer activities:

a. periodic evening and Sunday telephone blitzes to the families of non-attending youth
b. tutoring and remediation
c. social skill building activities
    1. Big Buddy/Little Buddy Program and Youth Resources Centers
    2. Student Volunteer efforts through attendance offices
    3. Youth Mediation Program

Youth Resource Strategies should be made at every building by using the following resources:

a. Community Resource Directory
b. Guidance or Liaison persons
c. Community Agents

PROBLEM STATEMENT

School Attendance is a national concern. School districts are addressing problems for students who are alienated from school and for those who are excessively absent or truant. The Cleveland Public Schools are no exception; however, the District believes that we should "Start with Thyself." We further believe that the school has more control over itself than it does over students, families and communities; therefore, it must begin to work within its own confines. Individual school-based plans are crucial to changing the continual decrease in the number of students who do not attend schools regularly.

Until recently, the Cleveland Public Schools have experienced a downward spiral which sets a number of other factors into negative movement. The logical sequence, like the following, occurs. As children attend school less, they develop fewer skills. Children with fewer skills are not able to match the academic expectation of their teachers; these children perceive themselves to be less capable than their peers. Therefore, a self-image begins to emerge. As the poor self-esteem continues to increase, these young people feed into a negative school climate. This climate is repulsive to other portions of the student population and to the general community. Security costs rise and the average citizen avoids contact with the school. Staff morale declines rapidly and educational programs lose their dynamism. Reading scores and other measures of academic advancement might be negatively affected by all of these factors.

Another part of this problem has to do with school finance. State allocations are based in part on average daily membership; as average daily membership goes down, financing decreases. Further, as community confidence in the effectiveness of school management and in the quality of the educational product decreases, the likelihood of public support continues to diminish.

The problem is furthered when we attempt to address average daily attendance data by grades for 1983-84. These data provided by the Department of Research are:

12th	85.05
11th	80.49
*10th	70.71
* 9th	80.47
8th	80.50
* 7th	82.30
* 6th	90.48
5th	90.09
4th	89.47
3rd	90.76
2nd	90.26
1st	88.42
K	89.12

Principals and Area Superintendents are asked to consider the above information as they address their respective individual school and cluster attendance plans.

*Note the great disparity between 9th and 10th graders and 6th and 7th graders as students move from junior high to senior high schools and from elementary schools to junior high schools.

Attendance is one of the most critical problems facing this school district today. The development of community support, improved school climate, the development of student and staff self-esteem, and the improvement of educational outcomes must all be interrelated to produce increased attendance in the Cleveland Public Schools.

The Problem is further explained by the following data provided by the Department of Research which relates to reversed rank order of attendance by grades for 1983-84.*

1.	10th graders	70.71
2.	9th "	80.47
3.	11th "	80.49
4.	8th "	80.50
5.	7th "	82.30
6.	12th "	85.05
7.	1st "	88.42
8.	Kindergarten	89.12
9.	4th graders	89.47
10.	5th "	90.09
11.	2nd "	90.26
12.	6th "	90.48
13.	3rd "	90.76

Average daily attendance and percentage of attendance by race and sex for the year 1983-84:

ALL SCHOOLS — ALL GRADES

	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	A.D.M.	%	A.D.M.	%	A.D.M.	%
Black	27145.11	35.15	255581.65	33.12	52726.76	68.27
Other	13203.87	17.10	11303.07	14.63	24506.93	31.73
American Indian	112.45	.15	110.12	.14	222.67	.29
Asian	366.23	.47	290.85	.38	657.08	.85
Hispanic	1651.05	2.14	1530.57	1.98	3181.61	4.12
White	11074.15	14.34	9371.43	12.13	20445.61	26.47
TOTAL	40348.98	52.25	36884.72	47.75	77233.70	100.00
Black	23509.32	86.60	22335.95	87.31	45884.27	86.95
Other	10603.95	80.31	9193.48	81.34	19797.43	80.78
American Indian	93.80	83.41	87.77	79.63	181.57	81.54
Asian	337.45	92.14	270.22	92.91	607.67	92.48
Hispanic	1372.06	83.10	1297.68	84.78	2669.75	83.91
White	8800.65	79.47	7537.80	80.43	16338.45	79.90
TOTAL	34112.27	84.54	31529.43	85.48	65641.70	84.99

*Principals and Area Superintendents are also asked to consider the above information as they develop their respective individual school and cluster attendance plans. They should focus on the students with the greatest need for improvement.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To further decentralization efforts, the District implemented a structure requiring clear roles and responsibilities for every level in the school system. The following is an outline of roles and responsibilities.

1. The Board of Education: Will define, adopt and review as necessary, the overall attendance policy and will expect the policy to be implemented in a unitary and decentralized structure.

2. The Superintendent: Will report to the Board on the nature of the proposed plan, progress, summaries and problems with implementation of the Attendance Policy.

3. The Deputy Superintendent: Will see that individual school and cluster pupil attendance plans, programs and activities reflect appropriate revisions and modifications; and,

   Will also direct all departments to cooperate in furthering improvements in student attendance.

4. The Assistant Superintendent for Supportive Services: Will provide assistance through the following offices and divisions.

   A. The Special Assistant to the Superintendent: Coordinates and develops a plan for improving student attendance for submission to the Assistant Superintendent for Supportive Services. Serves as a resource to faculties and community groups;

      Assists Cluster Directors and building Principals in developing and implementing school-based plans;

      Cooperates with Community Relations, Automated Services and other appropriate departments in implementing the plan;

      Serves as staff liaison to the Attendance Steering Committee;

      Responds to all requests and suggestions related to the improvement of attendance; and,

      Prepares and submits progress reports of activities relative to the implementation of the attendance plan.

   B. The Director of the Division of Student Assignments, Attendance and Automated Records: Develops and disseminates student attendance reports;

      Recommends attendance related cases for referral to Juvenile Court and provides appropriate documentation; and,

      Provides school personnel with instructions for securing attendance services.

   *C. The Attendance Manager, who reports to the Director of Student Assignments, Attendance and Automated Records Division, administers the attendance enforcement resources and coordinates the deployment of other district resources;

      Coordinates the maintenance of the Attendance Reporting System with school personnel;

*Position Eliminated

Coordinates attendance-related communications between the home and school personnel;

Controls and coordinates the due process rights guaranteed by law and/or Board policy;

Recommends attendance-related cases for referral to Juvenile Court;

Provides appropriate documentation for cases which are referred to Juvenile Court;

Coordinates activities with the Pupil Adjustment Office related to severe behavior problems;

Provides school personnel with instructions for securing attendance services and producing automated attendance reports;

Analyzes and interprets attendance reports;

Assists the Director in preparing and administering the fiscal budget;

Issues age and schooling certificates as required by law; and,

Manages the Attendance Office.

5. The Area Superintendents, who report to the Deputy Superintendent, will provide detailed plans to the Deputy based on the combination of planning efforts in each school cluster;

   Provide assistance in the planning of Cluster-wide programs which meet the attendance objective;

   Coordinate activities that address phone calls to parents, letters, home visitations by community relations staff;

   Involve the cluster-community council in activities designed to improve attendance; and,

   Supervise the implementation of individual school plans.

6. The Principal: Will present to the Cluster Director a detailed plan aimed at meeting the attendance needs of the school. The plan should represent input from teachers, the school-community council and students where feasible.

7. The Teacher: The teachers of the individual schools must be involved in the development and implementation of all aspects of the plan. To a large extent, it is the instructional staff that will make the difference in whether the plan achieves initial and lasting success. The teachers know the children and know the needs of the curriculum. This kind of knowledge must influence the structures of the attendance plan; otherwise, the plan will be neither realistic nor usable.

   It is important that the building chairperson and Union Conference Committee be involved in the development and implementation of the plan.

8. The Attendance Supervisors: The Attendance Supervisors, two of which report to each of the six Area Superintendents, provide attendance related services such as the following:

Contact families of students referred for non-attendance by home visits, telephone or in-school conferences;

Record results of contacts on appropriate card or form;

Report findings by writing information on appropriate forms and sending it to source of referral;

Supervise attendance centers, which are located in each cluster;

Issue legal warnings in accordance with law;*

Develop and maintain relationships with professional community resources;

Act as resource to school personnel in the areas of attendance endorsement and social agency relationships;

Coordinate attendance-related communications between the home and school personnel;

Control and coordinate the due process rights guaranteed by law and/or Board policy;

Recommend attendance-related cases for referral to Juvenile Court;

Provide appropriate documentation for cases which are referred to Juvenile Court;

Coordinate activities of Attendance Centers with the Pupil Adjustment Office;

Provide school personnel with instructions for securing attendance services and producing automated attendance reports;

Analyze and interpret attendance reports;

Assist the Director in preparing and administering the fiscal budget;

Issue age and schooling certificates as required by law; and,

Manage the Attendance Office.

9. The School-Community Councils are the bulwark of the efforts to successfully decentralize the school system. No issue would be of greater importance to the school-community council than the development and review of an attendance plan and programs for their individual schools. A successful attendance plan reflects a healthy and well functioning relationship between the school and the community.

*Legal warnings refer to Ohio State Code 57.09 which states that a notification may be sent to the parent or legal guardian of any student suspected of truancy. Truancy, as implied by the Cleveland Public Schools Attendance Policy, refers to any student who accumulates more than seven unexcused absences in any grading period in any subject.

The school-community council can be responsible for strengthening the individual principal's implementation of its plan. It can be a forum for investigation of successful methods of improving attendance as well as a place for discussing ways of assisting teachers, parents, and the principal in better follow-up.

16. The Department of Research and Analysis: The highly significant role and responsibility of this department is reflected on page #21 of the Student Attendance Plan.

11. The City-Wide Student Attendance/Dropout Prevention Committee: A group consisting of parents, students, staff and community representatives that usually meet on a monthly basis with the Special Assistant to the Superintendent for the purpose of sharing ideas and strategies for improving pupil attendance.

*THE ATTENDANCE ISSUES STUDY

Principals and cluster directors are asked to review individual school-based and cluster plans in light of policy and planning implications pertaining to the research effort, Part II - Attendance Issues Study.

Each principal and cluster will shortly receive the executive summary of the aforementioned study which clearly delineates the purpose, method and findings. The Student Attendance Plan contains the complete and unabridged account of this research activity.

The study provides information relative to characteristics of schools and all grade levels which have higher attendance rates for both black and white students; and, it

Also identifies schools with "high" and "low" attendance rates and develops a model for determining conditions that predict high attendance.

Notable findings are:

- Higher attendance rate schools have a higher percentage of black students and a higher end-of-year reading comprehension test scores.

- Higher attendance rate secondary schools have a higher promotion rate, higher end-of-year reading comprehension test score, and a higher percent of black student enrolled.

- Higher attendance rate elementary schools have a lower poverty rate, higher percent of black students, higher end-of-year average reading comprehension test score, greater percent of walkers, lower percent of students dropping out, and a higher percent of non-black students withdrawing.

The study calls attention to a comparison of high and low attendance rate secondary schools and high and low attendance rate elementary schools and provides information on contrasts in these differences.

Notable contrasts are:

- Much lower non-promote rate for high versus low ADA rate for secondary schools than for elementary.

- Smaller average daily membership for high versus low ADA rate secondary schools than for elementary.

- Greater percent of non-black students withdrawing for high attendance rate elementary but lesser percent withdrawing for all types of students for high secondary.

*Upon approval, this is to be attached to the Student Attendance Plan.